



King County

Metropolitan King County Council Growth Management and Natural Resources Committee

Agenda Item No.: 5 **Date:** March 11, 2008

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REVISED
(substantive revisions shown in italics and underlining)

SUBJECT

Briefing on Executive's 2008 recommended amendments to King County Comprehensive Plan ("KCCP"):

1. KCCP Introduction
2. Chapter 1 (Regional Planning)

SYNOPSIS OF ISSUES

KCCP Introduction: Executive has recommended seven new "framework" policies in the KCCP introduction. According to the Introduction, these over-arching policies will provide the basis for the rest of the comprehensive planning policies and target sustainability, climate change, promoting public health equity, supporting local food systems, protecting the Puget Sound, and measuring performance and reporting it to the public.

Issues posed:

1. Does the Committee want to include framework policies in the Comp Plan?
2. If the Committee determines framework policies are desirable, what are the framework policies that the Committee considers should be included?
3. If framework policies are included, should performance measures also be considered?

Chapter 1: The Executive has proposed to remove "neighborhood planning" as a planning tool relying on area zoning studies. Also proposed is a Code modification

changing the date by which docket requests must be submitted from September 30 to June 30.

Issues posed:

1. Does the Committee wish to provide further directions regarding planning studies used to evaluate land use changes to specific parcels?
2. Would the Committee like further briefing on the proposed Code change regarding docket request submissions?

BACKGROUND

1. KCCP INTRODUCTION

General

The initial changes to the Introduction entail updating factual information and statistics regarding County demographics and its economy. These changes are presumed to be correct. The Committee may desire to wordsmith some of the language but the overall the revisions do not present any areas of concern.

Multi-county Planning Policies

At page 3 of the Introduction, the Executive added a paragraph describing the interplay between the Multi-county Planning Policies (“MPPs”) promulgated by the Puget Sound Regional Council (“PSRC”) with the County’s Comprehensive Plan. This paragraph presumes the adoption of the newly proposed MPPs contained in PSRC’s planning document called Vision 2040. Adoption of that document by the PSRC is not scheduled to occur until late April. Again the Committee may want to consider clarifying PSRC’s role with respect to the County’s Comprehensive Plan, namely that under the GMA, PSRC is responsible for certifying the Transportation element of the Plan.

Framework Policies

Starting at page 4 of the Introduction, the Executive has proposed a new section entitled “New and Emerging Issues: Toward a Sustainable King County.”

Each framework policy is introduced with narrative text explaining the context giving rise to framework policy.

ANALYSIS OF FRAMEWORK POLICIES:

General

Framework policies are not required by the GMA. However the County-wide Planning Policies¹ have framework policies. Additionally, the newly released PSRC Vision 2040, scheduled for adoption in late April of this year, proposes six overarching regional goals, setting the framework for the more specific MPPs. Finally, the GMA itself has 14 goals to guide the development of the County's Comprehensive Plan.²

Some of the framework policies contained in the Introduction are themes that carry through the rest of the Comprehensive Plan. However, the Committee may decide that framework policies are not necessary, or may desire to modify, add to, or subtract from those proposed by the Executive.

If framework policies are adopted, the Committee may wish to establish performance measures to ensure that acceptable outcomes are achieved within acceptable timeframes. **The Committee may wish to consider and/or want to require the development of baseline data, targets, and benchmarks within specific timelines to provide a measurement of any framework policy recommended.**

Most of these framework policies are goals that are general in nature and could be difficult to measure without an agreed baseline line. Should the Committee wish to develop a method to track progress within the Comprehensive Plan policies, a general performance measurement policy could be developed with the specifics to be part of a work program and added as they are formulated. Alternatively, performance measurements may not be appropriate within the Comprehensive Plan, but more appropriately in other legislative action to ensure implementation.

As discussed below, because some of these policies are general, or the actions to implement them not fully developed, the costs – operationally, or to those affected by the policies, can not be quantified. Specific goals, plans and implementation steps will need to be identified before cost estimating will be possible.

Each Executive-proposed framework policy is briefed below:

FW-101 King County will be a leader in creating sustainable communities by comprehensively considering land use, transportation, public health, the natural environment, food systems and equity.

The County's desire to be a leader creating sustainable communities is an admirable goal. How one would measure success, however, is elusive. At the very least, an agreed upon definition of sustainable communities needs to be reached. While the policy implies that the silos of individual considerations will be removed, neither here nor explicitly elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan does the Executive articulate what policies will ensure that the County will fulfill the comprehensive approach. Nor are

¹ Required by the GMA, and as the name indicates, these are policies to which all jurisdictions within the County must conform their comprehensive plans.

² RCW 36.70A.020 & .480. See also Slides 3 & 4 of Attachment 1 to GMNR staff report 2008-B0054.

performance measures linking the success of the County comprehensively considering the factors listed in FW-101 to creating sustainable communities.

FW-102 King County will achieve a climate stabilization target in government operations by reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent below current levels by 2050.

The narrative preceding this framework policy sets forth the basis for the need to reduce greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions. The Executive also asserts the County is in the unique position among local governments to be a leader in reducing GHG emissions (mitigation) and adapting to the changes that the climate change will bring to this area (adaptation). The narrative goes on to detail the actions the County is taking locally and nationally on the climate change issue.

This policy is a verbatim quote of a goal found at page 59 of the County’s Climate Plan. The actions to achieve that goal are also found also found the Climate Plan. The major concern with incorporating this specific Climate Plan goal into the Comprehensive Plan as a framework policy is that it creates the possibility of future conflicts. Unlike the Comprehensive Plan, substantive policies in the Climate Plan can be changed without consideration of the Comprehensive Plan’s four year cycle review limitation.³ Additionally, by using the goals from one planning document as the policy for another, the potential for confusion over which of the planning documents controls arises. As the County already has a Climate Plan, the Committee may want to consider using that document and process as the repository of all relevant climate change policies or goals and actions, and make references to that document as appropriate in the Comprehensive Plan. While there are performance measures contained in the Climate Plan, they are not very extensive. Should the Committee determine that a climate change framework policy is appropriate, it may wish to explore further performance measures.

FW-103 King County will incorporate public health and air quality considerations into transportation and land use actions to ensure that the built environment can support a healthy populace into the future.

The introductory paragraphs to this policy describe the County’s HealthScape study and its findings⁴:

- People walk more in neighborhoods with a wide variety of retail services and easy access to those services. This improves health and reduces pollutants.
- Transit use is highest where walking is most prevalent, and walking is most prevalent where transit is convenient and efficient.
- Residents of more walkable areas are less likely to be overweight or obese and more likely to report being physically active.

³ KKC 20.18.030.

⁴ Introduction, p. 6.

- Residents in the most interconnected parts of the county drive 25% fewer miles than those who live in the most sprawling areas of the county.

As with all of the proposed framework policies, should the Committee desire performance measures, these could be developed. In the topical chapters, the Executive has incorporated more specific policies regarding this framework policy.

FW-104 King County will evaluate land use policies, programs, and practices through an equity and social justice lens to help in the reduction of health disparities and directly address issues of environmental justice.

Earlier this year, the Executive announced the 2008 Equity and Social Justice Initiative. The introductory text to this policy sets forth the link between land use decisions and adverse impacts on communities of color, or with low incomes, including the lack of services, facilities or other amenities in those communities.⁵ It is not clear by the narrative or the policy by what measurable actions the County will undertake to evaluate land use policies, programs and practices to help reduce health disparities or combat environmental injustice; nor is it clarified in the Initiative. As stated in the Initiative at page 10:

King County will develop and test an equity impact assessment and review tool and the associated process for incorporating the tool in decision-making.

Therefore, this policy appears to be prospective in application, with no established way, at this juncture, to implement the policy. **NOTE:** To be found in several of the subsequent chapters are policies calling for social justice and equity in County programs and actions.

FW-105 King County supports food systems that are ecologically sustainable and that improve the health of the county's residents.

This is a two pronged policy addressing those food systems the County will support.⁶ The food system must be ecologically sustainable (a term that is not defined) and must improve the health of those that consume it. The measures by which the County would determine what systems are ecologically sustainable are not clearly called out in the subsequent policies on food systems found in Chapter 3 (Rural). There are no policies or performance measures detailed to monitor the effectiveness the support that the County intends to provide.

FW-106 King County will continue to be a model local government for the protection and recovery of Puget Sound by working with others to implement recommendations of watershed-based salmon recovery plans, actively participating in the Puget Sound Partnership, continuing to

⁵ Collectively referred to as "environmental justice."

⁶ Defined to include how food is: produced (grown), processed, transported, distributed, stored, prepared disposed of, and rescued or recycled.

conduct water quality monitoring and assessment, and implementing effective stormwater management and wastewater treatment programs.

This policy encapsulates many specific policies in chapters 4 (*Environment*) and 8 (Facilities). Unlike the other framework policies, there are performance measurements associated with this framework policy found at “Monitoring and Adaptive Management” in chapter 4.

FW-107 King County will continue to measure broad community-level conditions and related agency performance and report these results to the public. King County will use these results to regularly assess the achievement of Countywide Planning Policies and comprehensive plan goals.

In the introductory narrative, the Executive acknowledges that need to measure performance and use that information to make management decisions. The Executive then goes on to identify two reporting mechanism it uses, AIMS High and KingStat. However, except for Chapter 4 and specific performance measures mandated by the state or federal governments, there are no performance measurements specified to monitor the effectiveness of these framework policies, or generally⁷ the other policies in the topical chapters. In fact, the existing monitoring policies in Chapter 7 (Transportation) have been proposed for removal. (p. 7-28).

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

2. CHAPTER 1 REGIONAL PLANNING

RP 207 - The most substantive change to this chapter is the removal neighborhood planning tool recognized by RP-207. According to DDES, neighborhood planning is done at the area zoning⁸ level. However, the Committee may wish to wordsmith the introductory language to the subarea planning section, found at p. 1-6, to reinforce the requirement that whatever the planning study tool that is used, the elements of RP 203 and 307 are to be addressed.

The other substantive inclusion is new policies regarding considering climate change in County planning at both the regional and County level.

Below are selected changes, by subchapter, that the Committee may be interested in.

⁷ An exception to this statement is F-302f, found at p. 8-21 of Chapter 8 (Facilities). It sets forth a plan by which the County intends to measure performance and manage its energy usage.

⁸ Defined at KCC 20.18.030: "Area zoning" as used in this title is synonymous with the terms of "rezoning or original zoning" as used in the King County charter and means procedures initiated by King County which result in the adoption or amendment of zoning maps on an area wide basis. This type of zoning is characterized by being comprehensive in nature, deals with distinct communities, specific geographic areas and other types of districts having unified interests within the county. Area zoning, unlike a reclassification, usually involves many separate properties under various ownerships and utilizes several of the zoning classifications available to express the county's current comprehensive plan and subarea plan policies in zoning map form.

I. Defining Regional Objectives, pp. 1-1-4 New and/or Amended Policies

<u>policy</u>	<u>text</u>	<u>rational</u>
RP-101	King County shall strive to provide a high quality of life for all of its residents by working with cities, special purpose districts and residents to develop attractive, safe and accessible urban communities, retain rural character and rural neighborhoods, support economic development, maintain resource lands and preserve the natural environment.	Emphasizes that County's intends to serve all its citizens
RP-103	King County shall seek comment during its planning processes from ((federally-recognized)) tribes.	Unnecessary qualifier
RP-105	King County shall integrate responses to the listings under the Endangered Species Act into future planning and economic development efforts and resource management programs to achieve a balance between environmental, social and economic goals and objectives, <u>and collaborate with others to conserve species and their habitats in order to prevent future listings under the Endangered Species Act.</u>	Requires County to work with others to prevent future EASA listings.
<u>RP-105a</u>	<u>King County shall integrate considerations of climate change into future planning, economic development efforts, and natural resource management to both mitigate for the impacts of climate change and adapt to the inevitable changes that climate change will present to the region.</u>	First instance of inserting climate change adaptation and mitigation consideration in planning at regional level

II. Planning Framework pp. 1-5-8 New and/or Amended Policies

<u>policy</u>	<u>text</u>	<u>rational</u>
RP-201	King County's planning should include multi-county, countywide, and subarea ((and neighborhood)) levels of planning. Working with citizens, special purpose districts and cities as planning partners, the county shall strive to balance the differing needs identified across or within plans at these geographic levels.	Removes neighborhood planning as a level of planning called out in Comp Plan. Now using area zoning studies as neighborhood plans. See p .1-1, 1-6. NOTE: Deletes RP-207, the policy specifying the contents of a neighborhood plan. p. 1-7 NOTE: Staff is investigating whether code changes to KCC to remove "neighborhood planning" should be undertaken.

III. Comprehensive Plan Amendments pp. 1-9-10 New and/or Amended Policies

policy
RP-307

text

Proposed amendments each calendar year shall be considered by the Metropolitan King County Council concurrently so that the cumulative effect of the proposals can be determined. All proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments should include the following elements:

- a. A detailed statement of what is proposed to be changed and why;
- b. A statement of anticipated impacts of the change, including geographic area affected, **populations affected, affect on climate change,** and issues presented;
- c. A demonstration of why existing comprehensive plan guidance should not continue in effect or why existing criteria no longer apply;
- d. A statement of how the amendment complies with the Growth Management Act's goals and specific requirements;
- e. A statement of how the amendment complies with the Countywide Planning Policies;
- f. A statement of how functional plans and capital improvement programs support the change; and
- g. Public review of the recommended change, necessary implementation (including area zoning if appropriate) and alternatives

rational

Implements the new emphasis on climate change as a planning consideration

Code Change

The only substantive change to the Code that is proposed regarding comprehensive plan amendments is a change to KCC 20.18.140.B.2. The Executive proposes that docket requests must be received by June 30th in order to be considered for the amendment cycle in the following year. Currently the deadline is September 30th.

Citizens submit proposed changes to the KCCP and development regulations via the County's docket system. While the docket is open continuously, in order for a docket request to qualify for potential consideration in the next review cycle, it must be filed with DDES by September 30th of the previous year. Docket items submitted in the previous twelve months are compiled into the annual docket report transmitted to the Council by December 1st. In the report, executive staff provides a written response to the docketed items and outlines recommendations for action.

In recent years, the docket requests have increased significantly (35 in 2006 and 51 in 2007). Many citizens also wait until the end to submit their request. In order to meet the December 1st deadline, as well as give a docket request its due, the Executive is

proposing to push the deadline for filing a docket request back 3 months. This does not seem unreasonable when it is a high volume year such as was had in 2006 and 2007.⁹ However, it will reduce the time a docket proponent has to submit a request.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

⁹ Of the 35 docket entries received by September 30, 2006, three were received in July, three in August, and fourteen in September, for a total of 20. Of those received in September, four were received on September 28, five entries were received on September 29 and one entry on September 30.

Of the 51 docket requested received for 2007, twelve were submitted in July, five in August and thirteen in September for a total of 25. Seven entries were submitted on September 28.